WISIONS
of sustainability

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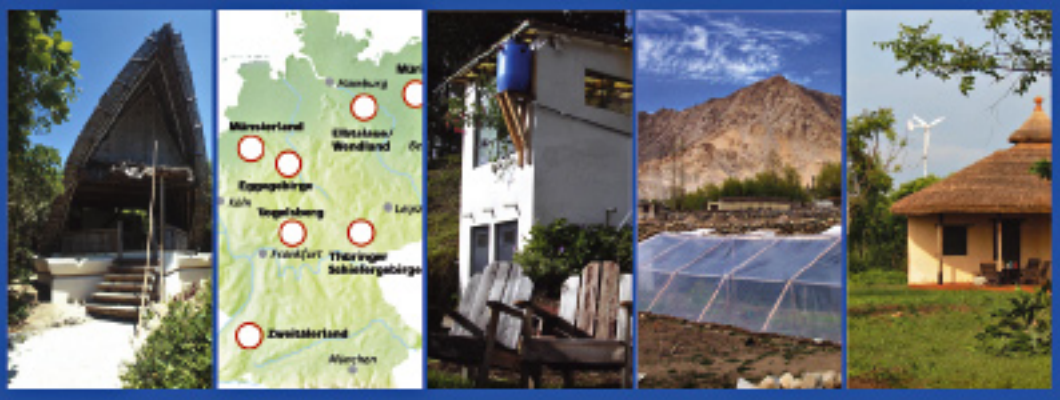
PREP

Promotion of Resource Efficiency Projects

Sustainable Tourism – Combining holidays with local needs

II. Issue 2005



www.wisions.net

WISIONS

Sustainable development is possible

WISIONS is an initiative of the Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy, carried out with the support of the Swiss-based foundation Pro-Evolution, to foster practical and sustainable energy projects.

Sustainable development is possible. Numerous innovative and valuable contributions from different countries, fields and institutions have shown that an appropriate reconciliation of economic, ecological and social factors is not unrealistic utopia. We have made a promising start, but the greatest challenge still facing us in the 21st century is to learn how to use the world's resources more efficiently and in an ecologically sound and socially balanced way.

Progress is being made; however, a dozen years after the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, many people, especially in developing countries, still lack access to resources, clean technologies, and education. At the same time, people's level of resource consumption and means of production remains unsustainable.

To meet global challenges like climate change, water scarcity and poverty, it is necessary to foster projects of potential strategic global importance by supporting them so that they can be implemented locally. Examples of good practice need to be actively promoted to a wider audience.

WISIONS promotes good practice in resource efficiency through its publication of relevant successful projects in its Promotion of Resource Efficiency Projects: PREP

WISIONS also provides consulting and support to ensure the potential seen in visions of renewable energy and energy efficiency can become mature projects through its Sustainable Energy Project Support: SEPS

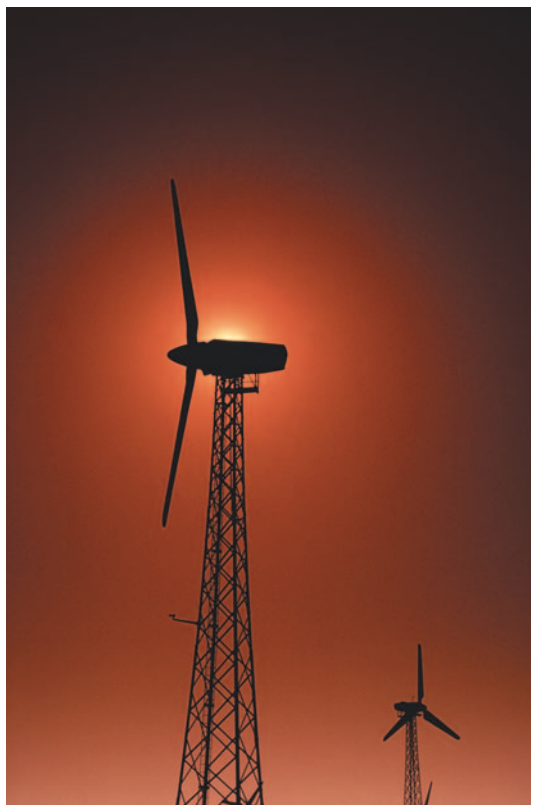


Photo: PhotoDisc

Sustainable Tourism

Combining holidays with local needs

Sunny beaches, far away places, foreign culture... who doesn't dream about taking off and leaving everyday life behind? Despite the current eco-nomic climate, the tourism industry is growing and has become one of the largest business sectors in the world economy, and taking a holiday at least once a year is common practice in many countries. The crucial factor is usually the price-performance ratio - the cheaper the destination and further the distance, the better. On the other hand, co-existing alongside this low-cost tourism is a different type of tourism, which builds upon exceptional and sustainable travel ideas and benefits from the growth rates in the tourism industry. This PREP-topic concentrates on sustainable tourism, as detailed in the following:

Sustainable tourism is a form of industry which attempts to preserve local resources and local culture, while improving living conditions and helping to generate income and employment. It lends itself to all forms of tourism, activities and companies. One of the major sustainability issues in tourism on which this PREP-topic focuses is the management of natural resources (energy, waste, water, etc.).

The World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg 2002 acknowledged tourism as one of the major energy-consuming sectors. Most of the energy in lodging is spent on refrigerating and/or heating rooms, water for consumption and pools, food and lighting. Energy efficiency presents a significant opportunity to reduce operating costs and, as a result, to improve economic and environmental performance.

Using renewable energy sources can significantly decrease the environmental footprint of tourism. There are many different renewable energy technologies, but the most appropriate technology depends on both the available renewable energy resource and the particular application, such as providing electricity for lighting or heat for cooking.

The growing number of people moving from place to place increases air pollution, in particular through green-house gas emissions. Of all energy expenditure related to tourism in Europe and the US, 90 per cent is spent in travel to and from holiday destinations (EEA, EPA) and 60 per cent of international air traffic is for tourism. Climate change actually threatens some of the most prized tourism destinations such as beaches, island paradises and coral reefs.

Many travel agencies already consider these facts and include the protection of local culture, environment and resources or the compensation of emissions caused by flights, into their offers.

In this brochure, WISIONS focuses on the significance of innovative strategies in the field of sustainable tourism. WISIONS presents projects from Tanzania, Germany, Ecuador, Switzer-land and Ghana that have been success-fully implemented, with the intention of further promoting the particular approaches used by these projects. Using a key number of internationally accepted criteria, the main consider-ation for the selection of the projects was energy and resource efficiency, but social aspects such as the inclusion of local population were also of relevance. The assessment of the projects also included the consideration of regional factors acknowledging different needs and potentials.

Photo: Jenny W.

All projects that fulfilled WISIONS application criteria were independently reviewed, and five of them, with the potential to make a significant impact on global energy and resource efficiency, are published in the following pages. WISIONS is pleased to present good practice examples from ambitious projects which have been successfully implemented on different continents. All of these projects are appropriate within their local context and have been developed to a level which meets WISIONS selection criteria. Although uniquely designed for a particular setting and problem, the projects presented can be adapted to different situations or can provide valuable information from their implementation phase. Links to the illustrated good practice examples shown in the brochure, as well as a couple of other issue-related projects, are available on: www.wisions.net.

The selected projects are not intended to represent the only possible directions to take in the field of sustainable tourism but they do demonstrate promising approaches.

Chumbe Island Coral Park (Chicop) Ltd.

Location:
Zanzibar, Tanzania

Project's Aim:
Establish sustainable conservation area management

Technical Answer:
Fund support through ecotourism

Photo: Manolo Yllera

CHICOP was registered in 1992 in Zanzibar for the purpose of the conservation of Chumbe Island. The objectives of CHICOP are non-commercial, while the operations themselves follow commercial principles. The overall aim of CHICOP is to create a model of sustainable conservation area management, where ecotourism supports both conservation and an environmental education programme for local schoolchildren.

Since 1994, CHICOP has been operating Chumbe Island as a fully managed and internationally recognised nature reserve that:

- includes a marine park, forest reserve, visitor centre and eco-lodge
- gives sanctuary to critically endangered species
- offers educative tropical nature experiences to tourists
- is now entirely funded through ecotourism

Seven two-bed eco-bungalows offer accommodation for up to 14 guests overnight and if a day trip is organised up to 2 extra during the day. Larger groups of schoolchildren are invited for day excursions during the low season. Overnight capacity does not exceed around 4000 bed-nights per year and no further construction of overnight facilities is planned: The route and programme of the daytrips to the park are regulated by the tide.

BENEFITS

The most direct economic benefit for local people from any conservation project is the protection of their natural resource for long-term subsistence and livelihood.

The Chumbe Reef Sanctuary helps restock depleted fisheries and assists in the recovery of coral reefs and degraded fishing grounds in Zanzibar.

In addition, CHICOP runs an environmental education programme for local schoolchildren and gives employment to 40 people, provides a ready market for local produce (souvenirs, building materials, foodstuff) and pays considerable taxes to the Government.

TECHNOLOGY

The visitor centre and the seven eco-bungalows were built with state-of-the-art eco-architecture and eco-technology. All buildings are designed to catch sea breezes for ventilation and do not require air conditioning. The openness of the bungalows, with no walls and open to the forest and the sea, allows for maximum through draft.

No part of Chumbe Island is linked to the national power grid; however the island runs no generators for its operations. All the energy for lighting, water heating and communications is provided by solar panels, both photovoltaic and solar water heaters. To protect nocturnal wildlife, light pollution at night is avoided and guests are given solar-powered torches for walkways. As there is no freshwater source on the island, rainwater is collected in the rainy season using the large roof areas. This water passes through, and is cleaned, by a natural gravel and sand filter located at each side of the bungalows, and is then stored in a large cistern underneath the living rooms. The water is then hand-pumped into hot and cold water containers under the roof, where it is heated by means of solar water-heating panels.

The used water from the showers and sinks passes through plant beds located in front of each bungalow.

These beds are planted with species that are efficient in extracting the phosphates and nitrates in used water. The beds are completely encased in clay, ensuring that no used water runs into the natural environment.

Composting toilets completely avoid sewage by decomposing human waste into natural fertiliser through aerobic decomposition. These toilets also economise water, as they use no flush water at all.

SUSTAINABILITY

Environmental sustainability: on Chumbe Island both the technology employed and all operations follow the strictest standards of 'zero-impact on the environment'.

Economic sustainability: while the management of nature reserves around the world, and particularly in Africa, depends on government and/or donor subsidies, Chumbe is now entirely funded from the proceeds from the eco-lodge.

Socio-political sustainability: the Environmental Education programmes that are run in the park for local schoolchildren, fishermen and others help to raise public awareness of the value of natural resources such as coral reefs and coastal forests and the need for their sustainable management. One of the achievements of these education programmes has been to secure support from local communities for the project - support which has been further strengthened due to the fact that CHICOP favours the employment of local, even untrained, staff, in spite of the high training needs. This was the case with employing local fishermen as rangers, for example. CHICOP offers typical Zanzibarian cuisine to its guests which has the benefit of generating employment for local women as cooks and also creates a market for local fresh produce over imported processed foods, reduces the environmental pollution associated with packaging materials and strengthens pride in the local culture.

Photo: Hal Thompson

FINANCIAL ISSUES

The overall investment since 1991 has been around USD 1.2 million. About two thirds of this was financed by the project initiator (conservationist and former manager of donor-funded aid projects). A variety of donors supported several non-commercial project components with small grants, i.e. for the construction of the visitor centre, biological baseline surveys, nature trails, translocation of Aders' duikers (Cephalophus adersi, the rarest antelope in the world) to the island sanctuary and the park rangers' patrol boats.

Park operations have been fully covered by tourism income since the year 2000 (year 3 of opening commercial operations); however capital payback has not yet started.

OBSTACLES

In the 1990's tourism started to boom in Zanzibar and many areas were developed without concern for the environment. This caused an extra challenge for the Chumbe Island project as there was little understanding of the vision and objectives of such an unusual venture. The opening up of the country for foreign investment also came with massive bureaucratic constraints and complicated demands and requirements from many different government departments. These demands were very time consuming and expensive making the project far more costly in time and money than planned.

REPLICABILITY

Technically, the project is fully replicable. However, the project management feels that few investors would be prepared to undertake similar projects in African countries until governance is improved considerably. The added costs of red tape, bureaucratic delays and corrupt practices could be a real threat to financial viability.

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REISELUST -
New Ways to Go on Holiday

Location:
Germany

Project's Aim:
Raise awareness within the German tourist industry of sustainable transport options for domestic travellers

Technical Answer:
Offer car-free holiday packages

Photo: DB Regio AG, VB Thüringen

The German Association for Transport and Environment (Verkehrsclub Deutschland e.V. - VCD) aims to enable and encourage travellers in Germany to take car-free holidays. One step towards this vision is the project "Reiselust - Neue Wege in den Urlaub - New ways to go on Holiday", which started in July 2003. This project has been sponsored for two years by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety as well as the Federal Environmental Agency and is being developed by the VCD.

The overall goal in setting up the "Reiselust" project was to raise awareness within the German tourist industry of sustainable transport options for domestic travellers and, in particular, to promote holidays without cars in Germany. In order to achieve this aim, the following six development goals were identified:

- the public should be informed about car-free holiday possibilities in Germany through press releases, magazines, television, radio and exhibitions
- the destinations should sign a co-operation agreement and commit to improving and promoting their accessibility to car-free travellers
- the partner regions should emphasise their sustainable holiday offers through their websites and through advertising and promotions
- a website for the project "Reiselust" should be developed
- best practice materials should be developed
- the topics of "Sustainable mobility in tourism" and "Car-free holidays in Germany" should be established in universities and colleges to raise awareness of these issues amongst the younger generation

BENEFITS

The project gives recommendations for increasing public transport means and use and minimising car-usage during holidays. Car-free holiday packages lead to less congestion, less pollution and less noise at the holiday destination.

In the past, environmental protection as an argument encountered resistance from the tourism industry. All holiday packages related to ecology or environmental protection were once considered as unattractive and unmarketable. That had to change

due to the fact that 25 per cent of all German travellers go on holiday without cars and 20 per cent do not have a car at all.

The VCD website www.reiselust-deutschland.de and the brochure "Reiselust" publicise a whole range of holiday packages which are feasible without a car and give information about the destinations and the means of arrival and departure, as well as information about mobility on site.

METHODOLOGY

The "Reiselust" project promotes car-free holidays through a variety of means including:

- the development of a communication network
- the development of car-free holiday packages
- the use of SWOT-analysis (Strengths-Weaknesses - Opportunities - Threats) in the interaction of tourist and transport infrastructure to develop and enhance tourism structures for car-free travellers
- the co-operation between different destinations within Germany
- the implementation of marketing strategies which promote car-free holidays to the consumer
- the development of websites for the regions which offer car-free holiday packages, providing the consumer with facts, data and information

SUSTAINABILITY

A co-operative communication network has been developed between different stakeholders in tourism, transportation and politics, enhancing co-ordination between tour operators and public transport providers. For example: the co-operation between Deutsche Bahn AG and VCD activities helped to revitalise an important railroad line in the "Thüringer Schiefergebirge/ Obere Saale" region. Such collaborations save time and cost through the use of group analysis and decision-making. Every stakeholder in the region can profit from special offers such as co-operative travel cards, which include public transport, tourist attractions and more; an example is the KONUS guest card in the ZweiTälerLand region in the south-west of Germany.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

There is no need for the regions to make extra financial investment in order to provide car-free holiday packages. The VCD completed SWOT-analyses for the regions Uckermark, Vogelsberg and Müritz and carried out meetings and negotiations with stakeholders in the region. All results and recommendations have been handed over to the tourism industry and the public transport companies.

OBSTACLES

Most travel companies advertise their destinations by emphasising their most attractive features, giving advice on car access to tourist attractions, but neglecting to offer advice on how to reach the destination or attraction by public transport. They miss the environmentally friendly target group. Due to budget constraints, tourism companies have not tried to change their advertising strategies to include environmental awareness or environmentally friendly opportunities for the traveller. Car-free holidays were not previously important to the tourism industry in Germany, but nowadays 25 per cent of people go on holiday without a car.

REPLICABILITY

Regions wishing to undertake a similar project should assemble all the stakeholders from the region's tourist and transport industries and political arena at one table. It is important to build a communication network between the different stakeholders. The SWOT-analysis is a good instrument to collect facts and data (about tourist attractions and public transport infrastructure as well as environmental problems, traffic, travel statistics such as length of stay, demographics, and so on). After the analysis of strengths and weaknesses, it is possible to develop recommendations for the best course of action. The analysis and proposals for change should be discussed and overall goals established, especially development goals, which should be set up. Such analysis can be made in connection with bachelor or master degrees. It is advisable to involve universities and colleges as experts for tourism planning strategies.

CONTACT

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Black Sheep Inn – An Ecologically Friendly Hotel

Location:
Chugchilan, Cotopaxi, Ecuador

Project's Aim:
Develop an eco-lodge, self-sufficient in energy, water and food production

Technical Answer:
Use of alternative energy installations, garden expansion and water collection improvements

Photo: Andres Hammerman

Photo: Andres Hammerman

The Black Sheep Inn is a small, popular, rural eco-lodge high in the Ecuadorian Andes. Perched on a hillside, the lodge is a perfect place to discover centuries-old culture and diverse ecosystems. It is a great base for day hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, acclimatising to higher altitudes and exploring the indigenious markets. The Black Sheep Inn features gourmet vegetarian food using produce from organic gardens.

The Black Sheep Inn aims to provide a comfortable and educational experience for guests, introducing them to the area, local customs and permaculture, while also making a contribution and an improvement to the local community and the natural environment.

The Black Sheep Inn's goal is to become self-sufficient in energy, water and food production. Significant steps have been made in this direction, such as the research and design of alternative energy installations, the expansion of the gardens, and the improvement of the water collection. The Black Sheep Inn will never be a 'finished project'. Change, efficiency and improvements are part of an ongoing process. Using permaculture ideas, there are plans for connecting existing features and buildings on the property for a more efficient use and re-use of resources.

BENEFITS

Since opening the Black Sheep Inn, positive economic side effects from tourist dollars include:

- the establishment of two locally owned hotels
- the development of restaurants and horseback riding businesses
- the training of native-guides
- the planting of 1000 native trees
- the creation of a transportation co-operative made up of village vehicle owners
- the production and sale of handmade local crafts
- the provision of aid and education to women's group
- the creation of employment
- the purchasing of supplies locally
- the provision of infrastructure aid to school, health-clinic and police (computers, printers, phone-lines, microscopes, copy machines, etc)
- success in soliciting donations for a community fund

TECHNOLOGY

Power:

A recently purchased submersible pump is powered directly by two 85-watt solar panels. With full sun it pumps 6 litres a minute and pushes water from the pond 60 meters up to a 4000-litre storage tank.

The Black Sheep Inn has been hesitant to purchase expensive renewable energy systems; it is difficult to justify spending USD 20,000 on a solar energy system when people in the area are very poor. Nevertheless, the Black Sheep Inn is interested in becoming a leader in alternative/appropriate technology. The village water supply could also benefit from efficient pumping using renewable energy.

Four-way lights on a 120-meter path with 12 lamps can be turned on or off from three separate locations. Lamps have 3-watt compact fluorescent light bulbs; this totals 36-watts for the entire pathway.

Water:

Water for irrigation will be stored in tanks on the property's higher ground; these tanks fill from two sources, the solar pump and roof water from the guest cabin. The roofs of the composting toilets also funnel rainwater to small tanks which are used for hand washing. As biodegradable hand soap is used, waste water from the sink can be utilised to irrigate interior gardens.

The guest cabin has three sources of water: the village system, a neighbour's spring and roof water from a bathroom. The Black Sheep Inn recently opened a new laundry washing area that collects rainwater and recycles grey water. All laundry is hand washed and line dried.

Cisterns collecting rainwater serve the buildings they are connected to; this water is used primarily for hand washing, gardens and urinals.

Grey water is recycled in settling tanks with enzymes, charcoal filters and reed beds for further nutrient absorption. No black water exists because human faecal material is dry composted.

Composting Toilets:

The Black Sheep Inn built composting toilets that are attractive, educational and productive. All toilets take advantage of a spectacular view across the canyon. Inside the rooms there are flower/vegetable gardens fertilised by means of finished compost from the toilet with the addition of beneficial plants. Roofs are made of a transparent material providing natural light for bathroom and gardens.

Recycling:

The Black Sheep Inn reduces the environmental impact by buying in bulk and avoiding non-recyclable packaging and by re-using paper, cardboard, glass, plastic, kitchen scraps, water and human waste on site. Rubbish is separated in all rooms. The Black Sheep Inn produces less than an ounce of non-recyclable rubbish daily per person. Waste not re-used or recycled on site is brought to Quito for further recycling.

SUSTAINABILITY

Environmental education in the area is another of the Black Sheep Inn's aims. Initiatives include a community recycling programme, enhanced protection for the Iliniza Ecological Reserve and also greater participation in ecotourism conferences to share best practices and successes.

The Black Sheep Inn is sustainable economically; it has no outstanding loans and it is profitable.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

The Black Sheep Inn started out small, but has always been both affordable and profitable. Prices range from USD 20-40 per person per night, and include dinner and breakfast, unlimited tea, coffee and purified water. Profits have been reinvested over the years.

The Black Sheep Inn community fund generates and distributes approximately USD 2,000 per year. This does not include the time the owners volunteer to the various projects, which remains unpaid.

OBSTACLES

Obstacles include language barriers, cultural and work ethic differences, Ecuadorian bureaucracy, slow rural development and lack of infrastructure; for instance phone technology did not exist for the first 4 years of building the Black Sheep Inn.

Photo: Andres Hammerman

REPLICABILITY

The Black Sheep Inn is unique. Location is everything in terms of attracting tourism. Yet many aspects of the infrastructure could be copied and implemented in other locations. Permaculture can design for sustainability in any climate, on any property including: composting toilets, organic gardens, food forests, water retention, wind blocks, filtration swales, natural building materials, animals, and native trees.

The Black Sheep Inn is a grassroots effort, involving low initial financial investment but a very high amount of physical work, both in hours and hard labour. Every new building, project or feature must comply with a commitment to high environmental standards.

CONTACT

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Myclimate – a Greener Way to Travel by Airplane

Location:
Switzerland

Project's Aim:
Promote climate protection

Technical Answer:
Provide voluntary carbon offsets for air travellers

Photo: my climate

myclimate is a Swiss non-profit initiative aiming to promote climate protection and a sustainable use of energy. It is devoted to awareness-raising and is a leading provider of voluntary carbon offsets. myclimate is represented in Germany by 500 PPM, a professional service provider in the field of climate change and in the USA by Sustainable Travel International (STI), a non-profit organisation.

Greenhouse gas emissions of aircraft are the number one environmental challenge faced by international tourism. For example, a return flight from Zurich to New York emits the same amount of carbon dioxide per person as does driving a car for an entire year. In view of this, myclimate offers air travellers the possibility to offset their greenhouse gas emissions with the myclimate ticket, funds from which are invested in environmentally friendly projects that neutralise the emissions caused by their travel. For example myclimate recently contributed to the installation of 200 solar collectors for water heating purposes in schools, hospitals and households in Eritrea.

BENEFITS

myclimate contributes to climate protection on a global scale by offsetting the CO_2 emissions of leisure and business flights. At least 80 per cent of the funds generated by the myclimate tickets are invested in the carbon offset projects.

As carbon offsetting is a very new concept, myclimate was always eager to adopt accepted standards for the selection of projects. Therefore all myclimate projects are implemented according to the rules set up by the Kyoto-Protocol in the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). In addition, myclimate applies the criteria set up by the CDM Gold Standard, which only allows technologies in the field of renewable energy and energy efficiency, as they will be of crucial importance in building up a sustainable energy future.

TECHNOLOGY

Reliable local partners are of crucial importance for the implementation of myclimate's carbon offset projects. Regarding technological implications, myclimate selects only project partners that have proven their experience in operating and maintaining the implemented technology. Much attention is paid to the requirement that projects must not lead to a dependency of the project partners in the developing country on a supplier in an industrialised country. In Eritrea, for example, all the solar collectors and boilers have been produced locally.

SUSTAINABILITY

In addition to protecting the climate each carbon offset project has to contribute to local sustainable development. The additional social, environmental and economic benefits may include employment generation, capacity building, technology transfer, strengthening of the local economy and reduced air and water pollution.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

myclimate has been set up carefully. Initial funds provided by governments, private institutions and a range of members have secured the organisation a sustainable financial standing. Therefore, myclimate was able to guarantee from the beginning that at least 80 per cent of the funds would be used to finance project activities. The high cost-efficiency is due to the fact that myclimate is a non-profit organisation and due also to the high rates of volunteering: in 2004 more than 650 working days were done by volunteers, which represents a value of EUR 80,000.

Project activities supported by myclimate must prove that they are financially viable. Generally, the contribution of myclimate does not exceed 20 per cent of the total volume. The remaining funds have to be acquired by the project developers.

OBSTACLES

The most significant obstacle was - and to an extent still is - the fact that the concept of carbon offset through sustainable energy projects was totally unknown when myclimate started it in 2002. In the past three years, myclimate has engaged in media work, which has resulted in more than 200 separate pieces of coverage in print and electronic media. At the same time, the travel industry proved to be an ideal partner in distributing the message to a wide population. In Switzerland, over 50 travel agencies offer myclimate's services. Today, nearly half a million of myclimate brochures are distributed in Switzerland and surrounding countries and millions of travel catalogues promote climate neutral flying - sponsored 100 per cent by our travel partners.

REPLICABILITY

The project shows a very high degree of replicability. myclimate has found international partners and the myclimate ticket is now available to air travellers in UK (www.myclimate.co.uk) and in the USA (www.my-climate.com).

The demand for CO_2 offsets is high amongst individuals and corporations and to date myclimate has only covered a small part of the potential international market.

Regarding the carbon offset projects, the replicability potential has also proved to be high: in 2002, for example, myclimate started a solar water-heating project in Costa Rica. In Eritrea, a similar project started operating in 2004. Currently, myclimate plans to implement the same technology in Colombia and Ethiopia.

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KASAPA Centre - Experiencing Africa

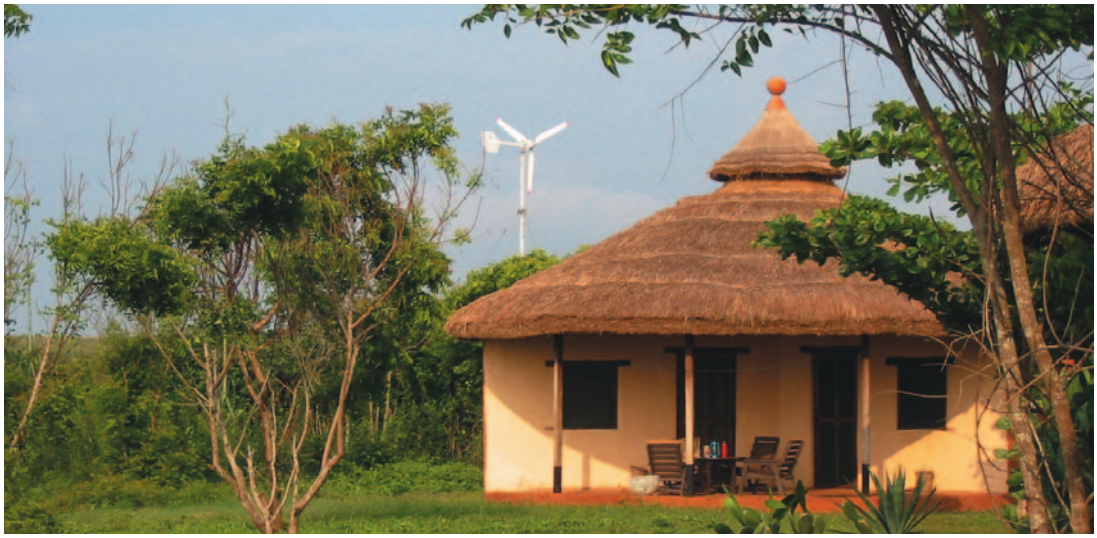
Location:
Nyanyano, Ghana

Project's Aim:
Develop eco-friendly and socially integrative tourism

Technical Answer:
Construct resort in traditional African style, use modern eco-technology and operate various integrative tourist programmes


Drumming Lessons


Guest Challets



In one of the main Ghanaian languages "KASAPA" means "good talk" - conversation that promotes understanding and agreement in order to pursue a common aim. The KASAPA project wants to facilitate contact and understanding between Africa and the western world within a model for an alternative kind of tourism: one that is eco-friendly and socially integrative.

KASAPA Centre offers various tourist programmes:

- travel holidays with excursions and contact-promoting projects
- workshops for African drumming/dancing
- KASAPA Centre runs a small holiday resort 40 km west of Ghana's capital Accra, in the vicinity of the fishing community Nyanyano, on a 2,5 ha area of "natural bush" which borders directly on the steep Atlantic coast.

BENEFITS

There are considerable effects which serve to alleviate poverty on both a communal and individual level: KASAPA Centre's special brand of tourism encourages personal involvement by tourists with local people and their surroundings. Quite often, this leads to tourists voluntarily committing to support individuals (e.g. by paying school/training fees for some years or funding medical treatment) or committing to assist projects of communal infrastructure (contributions to building a communal clinic in Nyanyano or a new school complex through a school-partnership between Nyanyano and a German primary school). To date, KASAPA tourists have raised about EUR 30,000 for such projects; the management of KASAPA monitors the correct use of such donations.

TECHNOLOGY

The buildings are constructed in the traditional energy-saving African method: plastered clay buildings with walls from hand-made clay bricks, clay floors and ceilings, thatched roofs. They are appropriate for the African climate without need for air-conditioning. Due to their traditional materials the buildings need regular maintenance, more than modern cement-houses; however this is not expensive as local workers can do it and, therefore, it creates jobs.

Hand in hand with this use of traditional resources comes the employment of appropriate eco-friendly technology: the resort draws its electricity entirely from its own photovoltaic system and from July 2005 it will also generate electricity by means of its own wind turbine.

The kitchen staff, who have up until now been accustomed to using gas, are gradually learning to use solar cookers. Technology is also in place for the provision of:

- a bio-dynamic sewage system
- composting toilets
- careful waste management

SUSTAINABILITY

The resort in its traditional African style does not look "alien" to the local people; they perceive it as "their own thing", which facilitates cordial relationships with the community of Nyanyano and fosters a very responsible working attitude amongst the staff.

Apart from Dr. Stemann-Acheampong as conceptual adviser, only Ghanaians run KASAPA Centre. They fully prove their competence and integrate the project into the socio-cultural and political environment.

The special style of the programmes gives tourists an authentic feel of Ghanaian every-day life and encourages them to form personal contacts with Africans where both partners can communicate on an "eye-to-eye" level - which promotes better knowledge of each other and enhances the self-esteem of the Africans vis-à-vis the white tourist.

As tourists can only reach Ghana by air this inevitably increases air traffic and related emissions. Therefore KASAPA Centre supports Atmosfair (a compensation scheme for air travellers, www.atmosfair.de) in which it encourages its guests to partake.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

The whole project was financed by private means, which was only possible because the traditional building materials and methods are much cheaper than modern ones. Only the wind turbine was financed by sponsorship from two private companies and one school near Freiburg/Germany. KASAPA has been in profit since 2002 - six years after its inception in 1996 - despite unfavourable conditions in the general tourism market during part of the initial phase.

Planning and building the KASAPA Centre took about two years. Time needed for running it is moderate; a lot of time, however, still goes into marketing the project in Europe, as marketing structures for this kind of tourism are generally not developed to a satisfactory level.

OBSTACLES

It took some time and effort to find competent local experts for traditional building methods: these craftsmen included a village mason for building with clay bricks and Togolese experts for constructing an improved version of the traditional thatch roofs.

Marketing is still a relevant problem: official Ghanaian tourism bodies are not particularly competent in marketing and not really interested in sustainable tourism projects. For an individual and alternative tourism project, it is also not easy to get coverage through Western marketing bodies; marketing tools of the umbrella organisation "forum anders reisen" in which KASAPA Centre is a member of, are in the early stages.

REPLICABILITY

Two Ghanaian villages that are regular destinations for KASAPA Centre's excursions have replicated the main features of the project and successfully enhanced their tourism potential. There is an ongoing consultation process with another village; a fourth one has asked for advice for an eco-tourism concept.

Factors facilitating replication of this project in Third World Countries are considered to be

- a focus on what already exists as being a sufficiently interesting potential for tourism; there is no need to "enhance" the natural and socio-cultural environment for the tourist trade
- traditional building materials and methods, as well as local expertise and indigenous socio-cultural competence for building and running such a project
- lower costs than for conventional tourism projects
- eco-friendly technology employable also in rural areas, "island" designs for electricity and sanitation through photovoltaic system and composting toilets
- support from experts in the initial stage

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Next PREP-Topic: Microfinance and Renewable Energy

The forthcoming PREP-brochure will follow the same objectives, namely to collect, evaluate and promote good practice examples, and will highlight the issue of 'Microfinance and Renewable Energy'

BACKGROUND

Microfinance is a promising system of providing people with access to basic financial services. According to the United Nations (UN), about 4 billion people earn less than 1,400 USD a year and only a fraction have access to financial services. Microfinance can provide individuals or communities with the means to help themselves. In addition, microfinance institutions are also involved in granting credit. In support of the principle that access to micro-finance is important, the United Nations designated the current year, 2005, as 'International Year of Microcredit'.

Originally, microfinance focused on the provision of very small loans to poor families to help them engage in productive activities or establish small businesses. More recently, in the realisation that the poor and very poor who lack access to the formal financial institutions require a variety of financial products, microfinance has come to include a broader range of services (credits, savings, insurance, etc.).

Energy is one basic need where microfinance has not received sufficient support. The remoteness of rural locations usually makes energy supply via a centralised grid system difficult; therefore people often rely on expensive fossil fuels such as diesel and kerosene. From the environmental and also economic point of view, the use of renewable energies would be the best solution. However, in remote areas people often do not have adequate financial means to afford renewable energy technologies, thus microfinance should be seen as a way forward for the provision of improved energy services in remote settlements.

People quickly equate energy provision with lighting, television and other "quality of life" benefits. However, the provision of energy does not lead only to social but also to economic improvements by the productive use of energy. Improved energy services support the profitability and productivity for micro, small and medium enterprises, and cottage industries. Energy can, therefore, have a very positive impact on income, health and food security. Increased income and fulfilment of social needs in turn allow a greater use of modern energy and more widespread investments in renewable energy, which bring further environmental and development benefits.

From this perspective, the new WISIONS topic focuses on microfinance for renewable energy systems. WISIONS is searching for good practice examples in the field of microfinance for renewable energy systems and invites everyone to send in their success stories.

FIELDS OF INTEREST INCLUDE:

Microfinance projects supporting renewable energy technologies such as:

- solar / photovoltaic systems, wind energy, micro hydropower, biogas or biomass

used for

- cooking, lighting, power telecommunications equipment, radio, television, house hold electrification, health clinics, water pumping, milling and grinding, water disinfection, fencing, computer education, operating machinery, etc.
- Public Urban Transport

in

- households or businesses

Photo: PhotoDisc

SEPS - Sustainable Energy Project Support

Realistic concepts and visions of effective sustainable energy projects exist, but the much needed implementation sometimes fails. Therefore the key objective of SEPS - the project support arm of WISIONS - is to identify those projects with the real potential to be of strategic importance in the renewable and efficient use of energy.

By providing technical and other forms of support, SEPS seeks to overcome existing barriers and will help clean and efficient energy become commonplace.

The most promising renewable and energy efficiency concepts are selected using transparent analysis based on internationally recognised criteria. The selection process is done via an annual call for applications. Once a project is selected, SEPS can provide additional guidance and support, for example:

- practical expert advice and knowledge transfer for effective implementation
- potential financial support to assist with project implementation
- guidance and support for obtaining additional funding
- promotion to relevant institutions, decision makers and scientists
- publication on www.wisions.net

Photo: PhotoDisc

BACKGROUND

Energy is essential, be it for cooking, lighting, or industrial application. However, people have yet to learn how best to use natural resources. Sustainable development depends on the efficient use of resources, and specifically on a widespread use of clean and renewable energy.

Widespread use of fossil fuels threatens climate and health because of dangerous emissions, leading to high social and economic costs. Today there are still more than 2 billion people who do not have access to sufficient energy.

As the global population rises and the world economy grows, challenges will also increase. This will particularly be the case if we simply continue with, or copy, conventional approaches.

Therefore intelligent, sustainable energy projects of strategic global importance need to be implemented and promoted.

CRITERIA FOR OBTAINING SEPS SUPPORT

SEPS has a set of criteria used in selecting appropriate sustainable projects and relevant forms of support. The following 5 criteria are obligatory:

- implementation strategy
- technical viability of the project
- economic feasibility
- local and global environmental benefits
- marketability and replication possibilities

Photo: PhotoDisc

ADDITIONAL CRITERIA

As the goal of sustainable development requires an integrated approach, some additional criteria are also applicable:

- social aspects
- inclusion of local population/ structures
- employment potential
- co-operation with other stake-holders

SO FAR ...

In the first SEPS round we received a substantial number of applications from all around the world - 40 in total - which met the necessary criteria. The project concepts ranged from solar energy use in developing countries to energy efficient lighting in Europe. So far, five projects have been selected for financial support and a further three for support in other ways. In order that it can support the implementation of more innovative projects, WISIONS makes an annual call each Spring for applications within its SEPS chosen field of interest.

Further information about SEPS can be found on:
www.wisions.net/pages/SEPS.htm

Contact us:

More information about WISIONS, application criteria for PREP and SEPS, as well as prior PREP-issues are available at:

www.wisions.net

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